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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 08 KABUL 01565

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARAGRAPH 3 (3))

MILITARY ADDRESSEES ALSO FOR POLADS; PARIS ALSO FOR
USDAO; DEPARTMENT ALSO FOR NEA/PAB, MR. BRUNO; THE HAGUE
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E.O. 12356: DECL: 31/SEP/93

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SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT AUGUST 31 -
SEPTEMBER 6, 1987

REF: KABUL 1527

1. (NOTE: EACH PARAGRAPH CLASSIFIED SEPARATELY).

2. (U) THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION MAY BE BRIEFED TO JOURNALISTS EXCEPT WHERE OTHERWISE NOTED. (NOTE TO BRIEFERS IN ISLAMABAD, PESHAWAR AND NEW DELHI: YOU MAY WISH TO CONSIDER CONCENTRATING ON SUMMARIES AND SELECTED EXCERPTS FROM PARAS 4 AND 5.)

3. SUMMARY:

A. (LOU) TO BE BRIEFED TO PRESS: WHILE KABUL REMAINED RELATIVELY QUIET WITH ONLY OCCASIONAL EXPLOSIONS AND GUNFIRE IN THE CITY, REPORTS CONTINUED TO COME IN REGARDING HEAVY FIGHTING IN: LOGAR, WHERE BOMBING PRODUCED CIVILIAN CASUALTIES AND LAGHMAN, WHERE SOVIET FORCES ALLEGEDLY USED NAPALM. OTHER REPORTS INDICATE RECENT OR CURRENT FIGHTING IN PARWAN, HERAT, GHAZNI AND WARDAK. TO THE NORTH SOVIET FORCES ARE SAID TO BE CONCENTRATING IN THE PANJSHIR AREA FOLLOWING A REPORT (REFTEL) THAT MASOOD HAD MOVED BACK INTO THE AREA. MULTIPLE REPORTS AND OBSERVATIONS BY DIPLOMATS IN KABUL INDICATE ARTILLERY AND ROCKET FIRE, COUPLED WITH DELIBERATE DESTRUCTION OF TREES TO ELIMINATE POSSIBLE GROUND COVER FOR THE MUJAHIDIN, HAVE CREATED GREAT HARSHIP IN THE PAGHMAN AREA WEST OF KABUL AS LOCAL PEOPLE ATTEMPT TO COMPLETE THE REGION'S FRUIT AND GRAIN HARVESTS. SHI'A OBSERVANCE OF THE TENTH OF MOHARRAM IN KABUL REPORTEDLY INCLUDED ANTI-SOVIET CHANTING. DEPUTY SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER VORONTSOV LEFT KABUL AFTER SEVERAL DAYS OF TALKS JUST PRIOR TO THE CONVENING OF A NEW ROUND OF THE GENEVA PROXIMITY TALKS. THE VISIT RECEIVED LITTLE MEDIA TREATMENT IN KABUL.

B. (C) NOT TO BE BRIEFED TO PRESS: REPORTS OF A SPLIT WITHIN THE PDPA BETWEEN HARD LINE PROVINCIAL CADRE AND CENTRAL PARTY LEADERSHIP UNDER SOVIET PRESSURE TO APPEAR CONCILIATORY MAY DELAY THE PDPA'S SECOND PARTY CONFERENCE. NEW REPORTING ON ENHACORA'S VISIT TO KABUL SUGGESTS HE FAILED TO INTERVIEW INMATES RELEASED FROM PUL-I-CHARKHI ON THE DAY OF HIS VISIT TO THE PRISON EVEN THOUGH THE REGIME IDENTIFIED THOSE RELEASED AS HAVING BEEN INCARCERATED ON RELIGIOUS GROUNDS. DRA DIPLOMATS RETURNING FROM THE REGIME'S SUMMER DIPLOMATIC OFFENSIVE ARE PROVIDING MIXED REVIEWS ON THE EFFORT. FOREIGN MINISTER WAKIL REPORTEDLY RECEIVED A MILD REBUFF IN VIENNA WHEN HIS REQUEST TO PLACE AN AMBASSADOR IN VIENNA AND TO OPEN AN INTEREST SECTION IN THE

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AUSTRIAN EMBASSY IN SAUDI ARABIA WERE TURNED DOWN
FLAT. THERE ARE REPORTS THAT THE SOVIETS USED HEAVY
PRESSURE TO GET THE DRA TO THE TABLE FOR THE LATEST
GENEVA ROUND. ICRC CONTINUES ITS EXPANSION IN KABUL
WITH PLANS FOR A HIGHER PROFILE AND LARGER PRESENCE,
NOTWITHSTANDING AN ABSENCE OF ANY APPARENT PROGRESS
ON ACCESS TO PRISONERS.

4. (LOU) KABUL PYROTECHNICS AND SECURITY: EXCEPT FOR A
ROCKET ATTACK ON NORTHERN KABUL AUGUST 30-31 (REPORTED
REFTEL), KABUL WAS RELATIVELY QUIET DURING THE REPORTING
WEEK. OUTGOING ARTILLERY AND ROCKET FIRE WAS HEARD TO
THE NORTH AND NORTHWEST PERIODICALLY DURING THE WEEK.

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-- AUGUST 30: THREE ROCKETS WHICH STRUCK THE KHAIR KHANA AREA CREW MORTAR AND HEAVY MACHINE GUN FIRE WHICH CONTINUED INTO THE EARLY HOURS OF AUGUST 31.

-- AUGUST 31: DIPLOMATS REPORTED ARTILLERY FIRE FROM WITHIN THE KABUL BASIN AT 1715, APPARENTLY FIRED TO THE WEST AND ADDITIONAL OUTGOING ARTILLERY TO THE NORTH-NORTHWEST BETWEEN 2200 AND 2300 ACCOMPANIED BY ILLUMINATION FLARES OVER KHAIR KHANA PASS.

-- SEPTEMBER 1: DIPLOMATS REPORTED AN EXPLOSION IN KARTE PARWAN AT 0815.

-- SEPTEMBER 2: DIPLOMATS HEARD SINGLE SHOTS FIRED IN SHARE NAU AT 0400.

-- SEPTEMBER 3: AT 1830 AN EXPLOSION RATTLED WINDOWS IN SHARE NAU.

-- SEPTEMBER 4: DIPLOMATS HEARD OUTGOING ARTILLERY AT 1730. IT RESUMED AT 2240.

-- SEPTEMBER 5: RESIDENTS SHARE NAU HEARD SMALL ARMS FIRE FROM 1500 TO 1600 AND AN EXPLOSION AT 1630. BEGINNING AT 1800 DIPLOMATS REPORTED ARTILLERY FIRE TO THE EAST-SOUTHEAST.

-- SEPTEMBER 6: DIPLOMATS NOTED SMALL ARMS FIRE IN THE SHARE NAU AREA IN THE VICINITY OF THE SOVIET HOSPITAL AT 0500. MULTIPLE ROCKET LAUNCHERS FIRED FROM THE SOUTH AT 0915. DIPLOMATS OBSERVED ARTILLERY FIRE FROM THE KARGHA AREA FIRED NORTH AND WEST INTERMITTENTLY FROM 2000 UNTIL 2230. A DIPLOMAT ALSO REPORTED SHOOTING IN THE SHARE NAU AREA MID-EVENING.

5.(LOU)? MILITARY MOVEMENT IN THE KABUL AREA:

(A) AIR MOVEMENT: DURING THE WEEK OBSERVERS NOTED HEAVY MOVEMENT OF SOVIET HELICOPTERS TO THE WEST, USUALLY IN THE EARLY MORNING IN FLIGHTS COMPRISING TWO MI-24'S AND TWO MI-8'S. THESE RETURNED USUALLY WITHIN 30 MINUTES. SIMILAR FLIGHTS, THOUGH LESS NUMEROUS, WERE NOTED DURING THE EARLY MORNING HOURS HEADING SOUTHEAST. A TOTAL OF 26 IL-76'S ARRIVED THEN DEPARTED, DOWN SIGNIFICANTLY FROM THE PREVIOUS WEEK'S TOTAL OF 38.

-- SEPTEMBER 3: FROM 0630 UNTIL APPROXIMATELY 1100 SOVIET HELICOPTERS WERE OBSERVED MAKING TOUCH AND GO'S ALONG THE RIDGE NORTH OF KABUL AIRPORT. MOST OF THE AIRCRAFT INVOLVED WERE MI-8'S. SOME WERE OBSERVED DROPPING FLARES.

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-- SEPTEMBER 4: AT 1745 SIX HELICOPTERS WERE OBSERVED
HEADED SOUTH.

(B) VEHICULAR MOVEMENT: CONJOY MOVEMENT DURING THE WEEK
WAS GENERALLY LIGHT. THE SALANG HIGHWAY WAS CLOSED TO
NON-MILITARY TRAFFIC ON AUGUST 31.

-- AUGUST 30-31: RESIDENTS NEAR THE ARG PALACE REPORT
HEAVY VEHICULAR TRAFFIC THROUGH MUCH OF THE NIGHT IN THE
AREA OF THE PALACE AND THE FOREIGN MINISTRY.

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* C O N F I D E N T I A L *

-- AUGUST 31: AT 0515 APPROXIMATELY 60 SOVIET FUEL TRUCKS (UNIT ID 1053) ESCORTED BY ZU-23 GUN TRUCKS AND BMP'S MOVED EAST ON PERIMETER ROAD. AT 0520 TWENTY-EIGHT ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS (BMP'S AND BTR'S) ACCOMPANIED BY FIVE TRUCK-TOWED D-30 GUNS WERE OBSERVED MOVING EAST ON PERIMETER ROAD.

-- SEPTEMBER 1: AT 1045 OVER 50 SOVIET FUEL TRUCKS WERE OBSERVED STAGED NORTH ON THE SALANG HIGHWAY. DURING THE DAY A SOVIET CONVOY MOVED IN THE DIRECTION OF KARGHA FROM KABUL. AT 1645 A SOVIET CONVOY OF APPROXIMATELY 60 VEHICLES, INCLUDING BTR'S, BMP'S AND SOME TRUCKS, MOVED OFF JALALABAD ROAD ONTO PERIMETER ROAD.

-- SEPTEMBER 2: AT 0700 FORTY TO FIFTY SOVIET TRUCKS WERE OBSERVED STAGED NORTH ON THE SALANG HIGHWAY.

-- SEPTEMBER 4: THIRTY-TWO SOVIET FUEL TRUCKS (UNIT ID 1032) ESCORTED BY A SINGLE ZU-23 GUN TRUCK MOVED OFF OF THE SALANG HIGHWAY AND ON TO PERIMETER ROAD, THEN ENTERED THE FUEL STORAGE AREA BEHIND THE SOVIET REHABILITATION CENTER.

-- SEPTEMBER 5: AT 0630 A LARGE SOVIET TRUCK CONVOY WAS OBSERVED STAGED NORTH ON THE SALANG HIGHWAY.

-- COMBAT IN THE PROVINCES --

6. (LOU) KABUL PROVINCE (FOR KABUL CITY DEVELOPMENTS SEE PARA'S 4 AND 5):

A. KABUL WEST: AFGHAN SOURCES AND OBSERVATIONS BY DIPLOMATS INDICATE INTENSIFYING FIGHTING IN THE PAGHMAN AREA. AFGHANS REPORT GENERALLY THAT AS THE AREA'S FRUIT AND GRAIN HARVESTS REACH THEIR PEAK, LOCAL PEOPLE WHO HAVE SOUGHT SHELTER FROM THE FIGHTING IN KABUL AND KARGHA NOW ARE ATTEMPTING TO RETURN TO THE AREA DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS TO GATHER THE RIPENING CROPS. THIS HARVEST WORK IS REGULARLY INTERRUPTED BY THE FIGHTING. BETWEEN SEPTEMBER 1 AND 4 FIGHTING CAUSED THE NORTHERN KABUL-TO-PAGHMAN ROAD TO BE CLOSED. REMAINING RESIDENTS IN THE BEKTUT AREA OF THE REGION REPORTEDLY ARE IRATE OVER REGIME DESTRUCTION OF MUCH FOREST COVER, A MEASURE ALLEGEDLY UNDERTAKEN TO ELIMINATE NATURAL COVER FOR MUJAHIDIN OPERATING IN THE AREA. SIMILAR OPERATIONS RECENTLY IN THE SHOMALI AND IN 1986 IN PARTS OF LOGAR INCLUDED SUBSTANTIAL DESTRUCTION OF ORCHARDS. AN UNCONFIRMED REPORT CLAIMS THAT SOME MUJAHIDIN LEADERS IN THE PAGHMAN AREA HAVE PRETENDED TO AGREE TO REGIME OFFERS OF LOCAL TRUCES BUT IN REALITY REMAIN IN ACTIVE COOPERATION WITH MUJAHIDIN LEADERS WHO HAVE NOT FEIGNED AGREEMENT. AFGHANS CLAIM THAT THERE HAS BEEN DAILY ARTILLERY AND

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ROCKET FIRE IN THE CHARBAGH AREA (NEAR PAGHMAN TOWN)
SINCE LAST AUGUST. SPECIFIC REPORTS OF ACTION IN THE
PAGHMAN AREA INCLUDE:

-- SEPTEMBER 1: TWO AFGHAN SOURCES REPORT HEAVY FIGHTING
IN THE CHANDAL BAI AREA (SOUTH OF PAGHMAN). RESULTING IN
TEN DRA KILLED AND (ACCORDING TO ONE SOURCE) FIVE WOUNDED

-- SEPTEMBER 2: IN FIGHTING AT QALA-I-SARWAN (ALSO SOUTH
OF PAGHMAN TOWN) EIGHT DRA TROOPS WERE KILLED.

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-- SEPTEMBER 4: DIPLOMATS WATCHED ARTILLERY AND ROCKET BATTERIES POSITIONED SOUTH OF KARGHA LAKE FIRE INTO THE PAGHMAN AREA DURING THE MORNING.

-- SEPTEMBER 6: ARTILLERY FIRED INTO PAGHMAN AREA FROM WEST OF KABUL DURING THE EVENING.

8. KABUL NORTH: AFGHANS REPORT (SUPPORTED BY DIPLOMATS' OBSERVATIONS FROM KABUL) HEAVY SHELLING OF THE SHAKADARA AREA ON THE EVENING OF SEPTEMBER 4.

7. (LOU) LAGHMAN: RELIABLE DIPLOMATS QUOTING AFGHANS FROM THE AREA CLAIM SOVIET/DRA AIRCRAFT BOMBED PARTS OF LOGAR PROVINCE, PROBABLY INCLUDING ALINGAK (34°50'N 70°22'E). UNCONFIRMED REPORTS INDICATE THE ATTACKING FORCES USED NAPALM AS WELL AS BOMBS AND THAT CIVILIAN CASUALTIES WERE HEAVY. ACCORDING TO THE RESIDENTS OF MEHTARLAM (34°39'N 70°10'E), CAPITAL OF THE PROVINCE, DRA UNITS IN THE AREA HAVE FACED SERIOUS RESUPPLY PROBLEMS SINCE THE EVACUATION BY SOVIET FORCES IN LATE JULY (REPORTED IN KABUL 1317). PRIOR TO THE SOVIET DEPARTURE, THE DRA TROOPS SUBSISTED TO A LARGE EXTENT ON STOCKS NOT CONSUMED BY THOSE BETTER-SUPPLIED FORCES.

8. (LOU) PARWAN: AFGHANS R THE AREA REPORT HEAVY NIGHTLY FIGHTING AROUND CHARIKAR DURING THE LAST WEEK OF AUGUST. THE SALANG HIGHWAY AS FAR AS CHARIKAR REPORTEDLY IS IN RELATIVELY GOOD CONDITION. IN A SEPARATE REPORT A RELIABLE DIPLOMAT REPORTS THAT SOVIET FORCES ARE NOW CONCENTRATING IN THE PANJSHIR. (COMMENT: WHILE THIS REPORT CANNOT BE INDEPENDENTLY CONFIRMED, IT FOLLOWS REPORTS REFTEL THAT MASOOD HAD MOVED BACK INTO THE PANJSHIR.) A REPORT THAT HAS NOT BEEN CORROBORATED CLAIMS THAT MUJAHIDIN SHOT DOWN THREE MIGS IN THE PARWAN AREA DURING THE REPORTING WEEK.

9. (LOU) KANDAHAR: RELIABLE SOURCES WITH GOOD ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON DEVELOPMENTS IN KANDAHAR CLAIM THAT IN VERY HEAVY SOVIET SHELLING OF THE MALAJAT AREA ON SEPTEMBER 1, MUJAHIDIN FORCES SUFFERED NO CASUALTIES. UNDERSCORING (ACCORDING TO SOURCES) THE RELIABILITY OF MUJAHIDIN BUNKER AND TUNNEL COMPLEXES. A USUALLY RELIABLE AFGHAN SOURCE CLAIMS THAT DURING AN AUGUST 21 VISIT TO KANDAHAR, NAJIB WAS THREATENED BY MUJAHIDIN FORCES WHO HEAVILY SHELLED THE CITY WHILE HE WAS THERE AND AT ONE POINT WERE REPORTED MOVING TOWARD A MEETING WHICH HE CHAIRED. IN A PANICKY EVACUATION OF THE SUPPOSEDLY TARGETTED AREA, 15 TO 20 REGIME VEHICLES WERE INVOLVED IN COLLISIONS.

10. (LOU) HERAT: A RELIABLE DIPLOMATIC SOURCE STATES THAT ON AUGUST 31 MUJAHIDIN IN THE VICINITY OF HERAT CITY DESTROYED ARMORED VEHICLES BELONGING TO SOVIET/DRA FORCES

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AND KILLED 15 TROOPS. ACCORDING TO AN AFGHAN SOURCE, DRA
MINISTRY OF HEALTH OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN DELAYED IN A
SCHEDULED VISIT TO A HOSPITAL IN HERAT BECAUSE OF HEAVY
FIGHTING IN AND AROUND THE CITY DURING THE PAST WEEK.

11. (LOU) KUNDOUZ: KUNDOUZ CITY RESIDENTS WHO REGULARLY
COME TO KABUL TO STOCK UP ON STAPLES NOT AVAILABLE IN
KUNDOUZ REPORT VERY HEAVY FIGHTING THERE WITH BOMBING AND
SHELLING HEARD AROUND THE CITY DAY AND NIGHT. TRAVELERS

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FROM THE AREA CLAIM THAT SOVIET TROOPS MANNING ROADBLOCKS IN THE KUNJUZ AREA REGULARLY DEMAND 1000 AFGHANIS FROM ANY RESIDENT WISHING TO TRAVEL PAST THE ROADBLOCKS.

12. (LOU)-4: DIPLOMATIC AND AFGHAN SOURCES REPORT HEAVY CURRENT FIGHTING IN THE PROVINCE. THE DIPLOMAT REPORTS HEAVY AERIAL BOMBING OF BARAKI BARAK (33°58'N 68°58'E), RESULTING IN CIVILIAN CASUALTIES. THE AFGHAN REPORTS FIGHTING AT NAMANYUZ (32°22'N 69°07'E), SCENE OF HEAVY FIGHTING IN LATE JULY.

13. (LOU) NANGARHAR: A DRA MILITARY SOURCE REPORTS GROWING INSECURITY IN JALALABAD PARTLY AS A RESULT OF BOMBS WHICH MUJAHIDIN DETONATE IN THE CITY EVERY THREE TO 7-FOUR DAYS.

14. (LOU) BALKH: A RELIABLE DIPLOMATIC SOURCE QUOTING TRAVELERS FROM THE AREA REPORTS THAT THERE ARE NOW TWICE THE NUMBER OF SOVIET TROOPS IN THE MAZAR-I-SHARIF AREA AS USUAL. THE SOURCE COULD NOT EXPLAIN THE CONCENTRATION.

15. (LOU) GHAZNI: IN FIGHTING WITHIN AND NEAR THE CITY OF GHAZNI ON AUGUST 31, MUJAHIDIN DOWNED TWO MILITARY AIRCRAFT ACCORDING TO A RELIABLE DIPLOMATIC SOURCE.

16. (LOU) PAKTIA: AN EXCELLENT SOURCE CLAIMS THAT THE DRA CIVIL AIRLINES BAKHTAR NOW FLIES TO AND FROM KHOST AT NIGHT.

17. (LOU) WARDAK: ON SEPTEMBER 2, ACCORDING TO A REGULAR AFGHAN SOURCE, MUJAHIDIN OVERRAN TWO DRA POSTS.

18. (LOU) POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS:

A. VISIT OF VORONTSOV: THE ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE OF SOVIET DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER YURI VORONTSOV WENT VIRTUALLY UN-NOTED IN THE KABUL MEDIA WITH NO INDICATION OF WHEN HE ARRIVED OR DEPARTED. (KABUL MEDIA NOTED SIMPLY THAT HE MET WITH FOREIGN MINISTER WAKIL ON SEPTEMBER 1.) HE MAY HAVE LEFT ON THE SAME AIRCRAFT THAT CARRIED THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO MOSCOW ON SEPTEMBER 5.

B. OBSERVANCE OF TENTH OF MOHARRAM IN KABUL TURNS ANTI-SOVIET: IN AN UNPRECEDENTLY OPEN OBSERVANCE OF THIS MUSLIM HOLY DAY IN KABUL (SINCE THE SOVIET OCCUPATION), MUSLIM SHI'AS WERE PERMITTED TO PARADE IN OPEN TRUCKS AND OTHER VEHICLES THROUGH THE CITY CHANTING AND CARRYING BANNERS. A NUMBER OF AFGHANS REPORTEDLY CLAIM THAT AMONG THE CHANTS WERE CALLS FOR SOVIET TROOPS TO LEAVE AFGHANISTAN.

C. AFGHANS FACE HARASSMENT IN THE SOVIET UNION: AFGHANS, ESPECIALLY YOUNG AFGHANS, RETURNING FROM THE

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SOVIET UNION AFTER STUDY THERE HAVE TOLD RELATIVES OF
INCREASING HARASSMENT BY SOVIET CITIZENS ANGRY OVER THE
RISING SOVIET DEATH TOLL IN AFGHANISTAN. THE COMMON
THEME OF ATTACKS REPORTED BY MANY YOUNG AFGHAN MALES IS
"WHY ARE YOU HERE STUDYING WHILE OUR SONS ARE DYING IN
YOUR COUNTRY?"

19. (LOU) HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENTS:

A. AFGHAN CHILDREN BURNED IN SOVIET MISHAP: TWO AFGHAN
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SOURCES REPORT THAT ON AUGUST 14 A GROUP OF AFGHAN CHILDREN WERE KILLED AND SOME WOUNDED ON PERIMETER ROAD AT THE SITE OF A FUEL TANKER WRECK. SOVIET SOLDIERS ATTEMPTING TO PREVENT LOCAL CHILDREN FROM STEALING FUEL FROM THE DISABLED TANKER REPORTEDLY FIRED A ROUND (POSSIBLY AN INCENDIARY ROUND OR FLARE) WHICH SET THE TANKER ABLAZE. MANY OF THE CHILDREN IN THE VICINITY WERE VICTIMS. A DIPLOMAT OBSERVED A STRANDED TANKER THAT HAD RUN OFF THE ROAD SURROUNDED BY CURIOUS CHILDREN AT 0930. AFTER LEAVING THE SCENE, HE OBSERVED A LARGE COLUMN OF SMOKE BILLOWING FROM THE LOCATION AT 0935. ANOTHER DIPLOMAT WHO PASSED THE SCENE AT 1035 SAW THE REMAINS OF A BURNED OUT VEHICLE AND NOTED ONE AMBULANCE APPARENTLY COMING FROM THE SCENE.

8. PRESS GANGS CONTINUE TO OPERATE: INDICATING THAT MOVING PRESS GANGS SEEKING DRAFTABLE MALES CONTINUE TO OPERATE IN KABUL, A 17 YEAR-OLD BOY WAS DRAGOONED OFF THE STREET AT THE END OF AUGUST. HIS FATHER, WITH THE HELP OF A MILITARY CONTACT, WAS ABLE TO BUY HIS FREEDOM FOR 5000 AFGHANIS. (COMMENT: THE LEGAL DRAFT AGE IS 18.)

20. (LOU) MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS:

A. AIR LOSSES IN NORTHERN WARDAK: AN AFGHAN SOURCE WHO HAS REPORTED RELIABLY ON RECENT FIGHTING IN NORTHERN WARDAK CLAIMS THAT DURING THE FIGHTING IN THE AREA THUS FAR THIS SUMMER SOVIET/DRA FORCES HAVE LOST 17 AIRCRAFT.

B. FLIGHTS TO URGUN: A DRA SOLDIER ENROUTE TO URGUN CLAIMED THAT NOW ONLY SOVIET HELICOPTERS MAKE THE FLIGHT AND THAT THE THREAT OF GROUND-TO-AIR MISSILES HAS MADE THE AREA TOO DANGEROUS FOR FIXED-WING AIRCRAFT. DRA PILOTS APPEAR UNWILLING TO FLY THE ROUTE.

21. (LOU) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS:

A. DRA DELAYS RICE PURCHASES: A KNOWLEDGEABLE SOURCE CLAIMS THAT UNLIKE MOST OTHER RICE IMPORTERS FROM THE ASIAN REGION, INCLUDING THE SOVIET UNION, THE DRA, DESPITE PROMPTING, HAS FAILED TO PLACE BIDS FOR ITS RICE NEEDS. BECAUSE OF EXTENSIVE WEATHER-RELATED SHORTFALLS AMONG THE REGIONAL RICE PRODUCERS, IMPORTERS UNIFORMLY HAVE PLACED EARLY BIDS. FAILURE OF THE REGIME TO FOLLOW SUIT WILL MEAN MAJOR PRICE HIKES FOR RICE THIS YEAR IN AFGHANISTAN, PARTICULARLY IN KABUL.

B. DRA CENTRAL BANK EFFORTS TO CONTROL FREE MARKET EXCHANGE RATE: A RELIABLE SOURCE REPORTS THAT DRA BANKS' EFFORTS TO CONTROL THE FREE MARKET EXCHANGE RATE BY SELLING AFGHANIS AT FOUR TO FIVE AFGHANIS BELOW THE MARKET RATE TO VARIOUS ENTERPRISES, SUCH AS RAW MATERIAL IMPORTERS NEEDING HARD CURRENCY, HAVE NOT WORKED.

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HOWEVER, THE VERY LARGE FREE MARKET, RATHER THAN BECOMING
TIED TO THE REGIME RATE, HAS INEXORABLY PULLED THE REGIME
RATE HIGHER AND HIGHER.

C. NEW MINISTRIES ESTABLISHED: THE PRESIDUM OF THE
REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL APPROVED ON SEPTEMBER 2 THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF MINISTRIES FOR FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC
TRADE, IN EFFECT DIVIDING THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE INTO
THREE MINISTRIES. (COMMENT: THE CHANGE HAD BEEN
RUMORED FOR A YEAR.) ACCORDING TO THE REPORT, THE

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RUCLAKA/FT BRAGG NC AFVS//POE//SB

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RUFDA44/CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GE

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MINISTRY OF COMMERCE WILL SHED THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR TRADE BECAUSE "IT CANNOT WITH ITS PRESENT STRUCTURE MEET FULLY THE REQUIREMENTS TO FURTHER GROWTH AND EXPANSION OF THE ECONOMY." THE MEDIA DID NOT INDICATE WHO THE NEW MINISTERS WOULD BE. PRESUMABLY COMMERCE MINISTER JALALAR WILL RETAIN HIS POSITION. THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL ALSO APPROVED THE CREATION OF A VOCATIONAL EDUCATION MINISTRY. DESPITE EARLIER MEDIA ACCOUNTS REPORTING ESTABLISHMENT OF A "MINISTRY OF REPATRIATES," THE KABUL MEDIA CONTINUE TO DESCRIBE THE OFFICE AS THE STATE COMMITTEE FOR REPATRIATES.

22. (C) NOT TO BE BRIEFED TO PRESS:

(A) PROBLEMS WITH THE SECOND PARTY CONFERENCE:

A SENIOR NON-(M) DIPLOMAT AND SEVERAL AFGHANS CLAIM THAT THE PUPA'S SECOND NATIONAL CONFERENCE, SCHEDULED TO CONVELE IN SEPTEMBER (ONE REPORT CLAIMS IT SHOULD HAVE CONVENED SEPTEMBER 1), MAY BE POSTPONED, POSSIBLY UNTIL THE FIRST HALF OF OCTOBER. THE DIPLOMAT REPORTS THAT IN ADDITION TO LONG-STANDING FEUDS BETWEEN KHALQIS AND PARCHAMIS AND BETWEEN SUPPORTERS OF KAKMAL AND NAJIB, A NEW DIVISION IS DEVELOPING THAT APPEARS TO BE EVEN MORE FUNDAMENTAL: LOCAL PARTY LEADERS AT THE PROVINCIAL LEVEL, WHO WERE GIVEN GREATER POWER IN THE 19TH PLENUM (MANY WERE ADDED TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE), OPPOSE WHAT THEY SEE AS THE ABANDONMENT OF THE SAUR REVOLUTION IN THE PROPOSED CONSTITUTION; EVEN MORE VOCIFEROUSLY, THEY ARE PROTESTING PLANS FOR THE SHARING OF POWER WITH MUJAHIDIN AT THE LOCAL LEVEL AS PROPOSED IN SOVIET-GENERATED "COMPROMISES." THE LOCAL LEADERS ARE SAID TO SEE SUCH POWER-SHARING AS DANGEROUS TO THEIR POSITION AND ULTIMATELY, SURVIVAL. IN ADDITION TO THESE IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES, THE DIPLOMAT NOTES, THE DIVISION FALLS ALONG A CHASM THAT HAS ALWAYS SEPARATED THE PARTY INTO A SOVIET-TRAINED, LARGELY URBAN ELITE AND A MORE RADICAL CADRE, ASSOCIATED WITH THE AMIN ERA, IN THE PROVINCES. RECENT SITREPS HAVE REPORTED PURGES TARGETTING PROVINCIAL PARTY CADRE ON CHARGES OF CORRUPTION, SUGGESTING CENTRAL VERSUS PROVINCIAL TENSION WITHIN THE PARTY WHICH THE DIPLOMAT HOLDS COULD MAKE THE SECOND PARTY CONFERENCE "A CONFERENCE OF DIVISION RATHER THAN A CONFERENCE OF UNITY."

(B) MORE ON ERMACORA VISIT: A RELIABLE SOURCE, QUOTING INFORMATION OBTAINED OUTSIDE OF AFGHANISTAN, OFFERED THE FOLLOWING WHICH HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY SURFACED REGARDING ERMACORA'S VISIT TO AFGHANISTAN:

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-- ON THE DAY ERMACORA VISITED PUL-I-CHARKHI,
56 PRISONERS WERE RELEASED. DRA OFFICIALS TOLD
ERMACORA THAT 49 OF THESE WERE IN PRISON FOR
RELIGIOUS OFFENSES. HE LATER EXPLAINED TO FRIENDS
THAT THERE WAS NO TIME TO INTERVIEW THESE RELEASEES.

-- ERMACORA WAS HORRIFIED BY THE INDOCTRINATION
AND "CLONING" THAT HE WITNESSED AT THE MAIN WATAN
NURSERY CENTER IN KABUL.

-- ERMACORA DID NOT VISIT THE PUL-I-GARI PRISON

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RUCLAKA/FT BRAGG NC AFVS//POE//SB

RUMQMQA/CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

RUFDAAA/CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GE

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BECAUSE HE WAS TOLD THAT PUL-I-GARI IS ONLY A DIFFERENT NAME FOR PUL-I-CHARKHI. (SIC).

(C) MFA VETERAN DISCOURAGED AFTER DRA'S AFRICAN FORAY: THIRTY-YEAR VETERAN OF THE AFGHAN FOREIGN SERVICE AND ADVISOR TO THE MINISTER DANESHJOO REPORTEDLY RETURNED, DISCOURAGED, FROM HIS TOUR THROUGH AFRICA AS PART OF THE DRA'S ATTEMPTS TO BUILD DIPLOMATIC SUPPORT, NOTING THAT WHILE HE WAS RECEIVED IN A NUMBER OF STATES, HE WAS NOT RECEIVED WARMLY. SARJAR YURISH, HEAD OF THE BAKHTAR INFORMATION AGENCY WHO TOURED IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND EASTERN MEDITERRANIAN, ON THE OTHER HAND WAS OPTIMISTIC.

(D) WAKIL MEETS WITH PARTIAL REBUFF IN VIENNA: A FRENCH REPORT SOURCED TO VIENNA CLAIMS THAT FOREIGN MINISTER WAKIL, SEEKING TO ESTABLISH AN EMBASSY IN VIENNA AT THE AMBASSADORIAL LEVEL, IN HIS SEPTEMBER 3 CALL AT THE MFA WAS GIVEN A FLAT "NO", THOUGH THE AUSTRIANS DID AGREE TO A DRA EMBASSY HEADED BY A CHARGE, PARALLELING VIENNA'S REPRESENTATION IN KABUL. THE AUSTRIANS TOLD WAKIL THEY WOULD NOT HOST A DRA INTEREST SECTION IN SAUDI ARABIA BECAUSE AUSTRIA WAS NOT AN ISLAMIC COUNTRY AND BECAUSE THE SITUATION THERE WAS TOO COMPLICATED FOR THE SMALL AUSTRIAN EMBASSY TO HANDLE.

(E) SOVIETS PRESS DRA ON LATEST GENEVA ROUND: [REDACTED] REPORTS THAT UN SOURCES CLAIM THE SOVIET UNION PLACED GREAT PRESSURE ON THE DRA TO ACCEDE TO THE SEPTEMBER 7-9 ROUND OF PROXIMITY TALKS. (COMMENT: SPECULATION WITH WHICH WE AGREE ASSUMES THAT THE PRESSURE WAS REQUIRED TO GAIN ACCEPTANCE OF THE TERMS TO BE OFFERED RATHER THAN OVER THE QUESTION OF TIMING.

(F) ICRC EXPANSION ACCELERATES: THE ICRC CONTINUES TO EXPAND ITS MEDICAL PRESENCE ABSENT ANY REPORTED PROGRESS ON THE QUESTION OF ACCESS TO PRISONERS. IT EXPECTS SHORTLY TO HAVE A "CHIEF OF DELEGATION," RAISING THE STATUS AND PROFILE OF THE ICRC PRESENCE. A "WAR-WOUNDED HOSPITAL" WITH AN EXPATRIATE STAFF OF 12 (AND "ROOM TO GROW"? IS PLANNED TO BEGIN OPERATIONS IN EARLY 1988.

23. MOSCOW MINIMIZE CONSIDERED. EALUM

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